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Historical Fiction
For the Period of the
American Revolution

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ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL FICTION FOR THE PERIOD OF
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

by

EDNA W. SHELDON

A THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF LIBRARY SCIENCE

in the

STATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

in the

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Preface.

So many historical novels have been written concerning our revolutionary war that there is a wealth of material on the subject. This thesis is therefore limited to those which describe different locations of the country and those which deal with different conditions. The list, including fourteen books, is arranged chronologically, taking up in succession the causes of the war, the battles and skirmishes and lastly the issue and results.

Each work included in the list has one or more of the following features:

- a. An historical personage introduced as a speaking character.
- b. An historical event categorically described.
- c. An historical town, city or place, categorically described.
- d. Positive and tolerably minute description of the period.

The leading characters in the novel whether appearing in a few chapters or throughout the entire work, are marked "pas" (for passim). Any historical person introduced cursorily is marked "cur" to indicate the extent to which he appears in the work. This scheme is used by Mr. John Thompson of the library of Philadelphia, who is preparing a Dictionary of Historical Fiction.

In this thesis are included, taken intact from Miss Gunthorp's thesis (1900) entitled, "A study of American History, 1492-1898, through a selected and annotated list of historical novels," four novels, viz., A Bow of Orange Ribbon, Hugh Wynne, Janice Meredith, and The Pilot, covering the period of the Revolution.

A Bow of Orange Ribbon.

Amelia Barr.

Author: Barr, Amelia Edith (Huddleston).

Title: The bow of orange ribbon. A romance of New York.

Period: May, 1765 - April, 1775.

Historical personages: none.

Historical events:

Opening of the Revolution.

Closing of His Majesty's custom house by the committee of safety. Chap. 15.

Seizing of the arms at City Hall. Chap. 16.

Town, city or place:

New York.

London.

Society and manners of period:

London life in the last quarter of the 18th century, Ch.12

Home life of the Dutch in New York, pas.

Dutch house, chap. 3.

Dutch thriftiness and piety, pas.

Critical estimate:

"The Bow of Orange Ribbon is a beautifully told love story of life in New York and England just before the Revolution." Critic 9: 249.

In the Valley.

Harold Frederic.

Author: Frederic, Harold.
Title: In the Valley.
Period: Nov. 13, 1757-1784.

Historical personages:

General Bradstreet, chap.19---ritish officer.
General Burgoyne, chap.28.
Colonel Dayton, cur. delegate to Continental Congress.
John Frey, cur. chap.19.
John Jay, chap.19. First chief justice.
Sir John Johnson, cur. son of Sir William.
General Howe, chap. 28. British officer.
General Montgomery, chap.31. American general in expedition against Quebec.
Philip Schuyler, chap. 31. American soldier.
General Washington. American general.

Historical events:

Attack on Quebec, chap. 24.
Battle of Bunker Hill, cur. chap.22.
Early Indian raids, chap. 1 and 2.
Intrigues with the Six Nations, cur.

Town, cit or place.

Mohawk valley.
Albany.
Quebec.
Fort Schuyler.

Society and manners of period.

Life of the Dutch inhabitants in eastern New York.

Critical estimate:

"The story is told by a Dutchman deeply prejudiced against the British cause, the narrative burning with racial hatred. The book is highly interesting and historically correct."

Baker, Guide to the best fiction

Richard Carvel

Winston Churchill

Author: Churchill, Winston.

Title: Richard Carvel.

Period: 1760-1783.

Historical personages.

Charles Fox, pas. Member of English Parliament.

David Garrick, cur. chap. 36. English actor.

Lord Baltimore, cur. English premier.

John Paul Jones, pas. American naval hero.

Horace Walpole, pas. Member of English Parliament.

George Washington, pas. American commander-in-chief.

Gov. Sharp, cur. Governor of Maryland.

Historical events:

Political events leading up to the Revolution, cur.

Sea fight between the Seraphis and the Bon Homme Richard,
chap. 52.

Town, city or place:

Maryland, Annapolis.

London.

Society and manners.

Maryland colonial life.

Life in fashionable circles of London.

Life on board a pirate ship.

Critical estimate:

The characterization of Richard Carvel frankly romantic as it is, is unmistakably one of the very best of its type in the fiction of recent years. Mr. Churchill has

given us a very illuminating although a partial glimpse of society in Maryland province at the time when trouble was brewing in the fifties and sixties, just before the war of the Revolution."

Atlantic Monthly: Apr. 1907, 35; 410

Hugh Wynne

Silas Weir Mitchell

Author: Mitchell, Silas Weir.

Title: Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker. Sometime Prévôt Lieutenant-Colonel on the staff of his excellency George Washington.

Period: Nov. 1765-April, 1783.

Historical personages:

William Allen, chap. 20. American jurist.

Major John Andre, cur. British officer.

General Arnold, chap. 24. American officer.

Major George Etherington, cur.

Captain Hamilton, cur. American officer.

General Knox, chap. 16. American statesman and soldier.

General La Fayette, cur. French officer in American Revolution.

Duc de Lauzun, chap. 27.

Capt. Montresor, cur.

Dr. Morgan, chap. 5.

John Morris, chap. 5.

Daniel Offley, chap. 10.

James Pemberton, chap. 10.

John Penn, chap. 1.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, pas. Signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Colonel Tarleton, chap. 15. British officer.

Colonel Tilghman, chap. 20. Revolutionary officer.

Captain Wallace, chap. 5.

James Wilson, pas. Jurist.

Historical events:

British winter quarters in Philadelphia, chap. 15-21.

Battle of Germantown, chap. 17.

Valley Forge, chap. 18.

American troops enter Philadelphia, chap. 21.

Death of Major Andre, chap. 25-26.

Battle of Yorktown, chap. 28.

The Arnold treachery, chap. 24.

Town, city or place:

Philadelphia:

Yorktown.

Society and manners of period:

Old Quaker house, chap. 2.

House of an aristocratic family, chap. 3.

School life in Philadelphia, chap. 2-3.

Meeting of the Friends, chap. 10

Prison life in war time, chap. 1 .

Mischianza, chap. 20.

Political intrigues, chap. 27.

Critical estimate:

"The Hugh Wynne of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell has certain qualities that distinguish it from anything we have had before.----- It is wholly contemporary in spirit. The opinions as to events of society and war, and such historic characters as Washington and Dr. Rush and Andre and the Quakers and aristocracy of Philadelphia are the opinions of their contemporaries and not of Dr. Weir Mitchell."

Jan. 1898, Harper's Magazine:96: 317.

Janice Meredith

Paul Leicester Ford

Author: Ford, Paul Leicester.

Title: Jenice Meredith, a story of the American Revolution.

Period: 1774- June, 1782.

Historical personages:

John Andre, cur.

Billy, servant of Washington, cur.

Colonel David Cobb, chap. 61.

Lord Cornwallis, pas. British commander.

Sir W. Merskine, cur.

Gen. Gates, cur.

Major Gibbs, chap. 23.

Colonel Wm. Grayson, chap. 24.

Gen. Greene, chap. 35. American officer.

Colonel Edward Hall, chap. 33.

Sir Wm. Howe, cur. British officer.

Gen. La Fayette, chap. 61. French officer.

Gen. Gen. Charles Lee, cur.

Capt. Henry Lee, Light-horse Harry, chap. 37.

Governor Livingston.

Josiah Loring, chap. 45.

Major General Mifflin, chap. 23.

Gen. Putnam, cur. American general.

Colonel Ruhl, chap. 33.

Joseph Reed, chap. 23.

Frederick von Roesesel, cur.

Count Rochambeau, chap. 61. French soldier who fought in the American Revolution.

Filghman, cur. Revolutionary officer.

George Washington, pas. American commander-in-chief.

Martha Washington, cur. Wife of George Washington.

James Wilkinson, chap. 33.

Historical events:

Washington's retreat across the Delaware, chap. 25-28.

Victory of Trenton, 1776, chap. 33.

Battle of Princeton, 1776, chap. 35.

Resignation of Howe, chap. 46.

Winter of 1777-1778.

Battle of Yorktown, chap. 61.

Town, city or place:

New Jersey.

Philadelphia.

Society and manners of period:

Winter quarters in Philadelphia, chap. 41-47.

Miscellaneous, chap. 48.

Vacillation of the people.

Political intrigues.

Suffering and hardships of American army.

Colonial hospitality.

Critical estimate:

"Mr. Ford embodies the rare combination of a wide and accurate knowledge of the facts of history with the peculiar talent of the novelist."

Dial, 8th ; 49. Dec. 16, 1899.

Author: Charters, Robert W.

Title: Cardigan.

Period: May, 1774.

Historical personages:

Walter Butler, pas. Tory soldier.

Col. Cressy, pas. American officer.

Lord Lumley, pas. Royal Governor of Maryland.

General Gage, cur. American officer.

John Hancock, cur. American statesman.

Patrick Henry, chap. 14. American orator.

Colonel Guy Johnson, pas. Cousin of Capt. Johnson.

Captain John Johnson, pas. Son of Sir Will. Johnson.

Sir William Johnson, pas. Royal commissioner of Indian affairs.

Major Pitcairn. British officer.

Historical events:

Intrigues with the Indians.

Uprising of the Six Nations, chap. 11.

Battle of Lexington, chap. 27-28.

Town, city or place:

Albany.

Johnstown, N. Y.

Ft. Pitt.

Pittsburg.

Tryon Co., N. Y.

Society and manners of period:

Vivid pictures of Indian life and of the trail, pas.

Life in the frontier towns and forts, was.

Critical estimate:

"Mr. Chambers has surpassed himself in this story of our Revolutionary period. We should call the book one of the half dozen strongest and most fascinating romances of American history."

Dial, 31: 366. 16 Nov. 1901.

A Yankee Volunteer

H. Imilay Taylor

Author: Taylor, M. May.

Title: A Yankee Volunteer.

Period: August, 1774. .

Historical personages:

Samuel Adams, cur. Governor of Massachusetts.

Sir Henry Clinton, cur. chap. 34. British officer.

Lord Cornwallis, cur. British general.

General Green, cur. American officer.

John Hancock. American statesman.

Partick Henry, cur. Statesman and orator.

John Jay, cur. chap. 7. Chief justice.

Richard Henry Lee, cur. Signer of declaration of Independence.

General Montgomery, chap. 19. American officer.

Peyton Randolph, cur. First president of Congress:

George Washington, cur. Commander-in-chief.

Martha Washington, cur. Wife of George Washington.

Historical events:

First Continental Congress at Philadelphia, cur.

Battle of Lexington and Concord, chap. 13.

Employment of Hessian soldiers, cur.

Reading of the Declaration of Independence, chap. 34.

Battle of Trenton, chap. 45.

Gen. Howe's evacuation of Boston, cur.

Town, city or place:

Salem.

Boston, Faneuil Hall, cur.

Marblehead, Mass.

Old South meeting-house, Boston.

New York.

Society and manners:

Life in Boston and the surrounding towns at time of British occupation.

Antipathy between Whigs and Tories, cur.

Critical estimate:

"A Yankee Volunteer" takes up the condition of affairs at the beginning of the Revolution, also the period just preceding. An interesting love story forms the basis of the book. Historical characters and places are well treated.

W. W. S.

The Green Mountain Boys

Daniel Pierce Thompson

Author: Thompson, Daniel Pierce.

Title: Green Mountain Boys.

Period: April, 1775.

Historical personages:

Ethan Allen, pas. Leader of Green Mountain boys.

Benedict Arnold, cur. American officer.

General Burgoyne, cur. British officer.

General St. Clair, cur. American general.

General Schuyler, cur. American general.

Historical events:

Capture of Ticonderoga, chap. 3.

Organization of Green Mountain boys. chap. 5.

Quarrels over Vermont land grants, cur.

Town, city or place:

Albany, cur.

Bennington, Vt.

Lake Champlain.

Crown Point.

Ft. Frederick.

Green Mountains.

Ticonderoga.

Society and manners of period:

Rude life of Vermont mountaineers, cur.

Critical estimate:

"A romance of the settlement of Vermont, embodying
hero tales, incidents of the quarrels between Vermont

and New York, and stirring episodes like the capture of Ticonderoga, all of them striped in local colour."

Baker, Guide to the best fiction.

The Rangers

Daniel Pierce Thompson

Author: Thompson, Daniel Pierce.

Title: The Rangers.

Period: March, 1775.

Historical personages:

Ethan Allen, cur. Commander of Green Mountain boys.

Ira Allen, cur. Secretary of Council of Safety.

General Burgoyne. British officer.

Chief Justice Chandler. Local judge.

Thomas Chittendon, cur. First governor of Vermont.

William French, cur. Revolutionary soldier.

Matthew Lyon, chap. 1: bk. 2. Lieutenant in American army.

Jane McRea, pas. Local heroine killed by the Indians.

Gideon Clin, cur. Judge in Bennington.

Colonel Warner, pas. bk.2, chap.14. American officer with Ethan Allen.

Historical events:

Battle of Bennington, vol.2, chap.12.

Organization of Green Mountain boys, vol.2, chap.1.

Quarrels over Vermont land grants, pas.

Local trouble between Whigs and Tories, cur.

Town, city or place:

Green Mountains, Vermont.

Wearminster, Vermont.

Bennington, Vermont.

Guilford, Vermont.

Society and manners of the period:

Life in British army circles, chap.46, bk. 2.

Life of residents of Vermont, cur.

Critical estimate:

"The Rangers" is a story of the organization of Vermont troops for the purpose of defending the Vermont land grants which the New York inhabitants were appropriating. The book is well written and like the "Green Mountain Boys," by the same author, is highly entertaining.

E. W. S.

The Tory Lover

Sarah Orne Jewett

Author: Jewett, Sarah Orne.

Title: The Tory Lover.

Period: October, 1777.

Historical personages:

Samuel Adams, cur. Governor of Massachusetts.

Benjamin Franklin, cur. American statesman.

Col. Jonathan Hamilton, pas. American officer.

John Hancock, cur. Member of Mass. constitutional convention.

Paul Jones, pas. American naval hero.

Lord Newberry, cur.

General George Washington, Commander-in-chief.

Historical events:

Launching of Paul Jones' ship, the Ranger, and his harassing expedition along the coast of England.

Town, city or place:

Berwick, Me.

York, Va.

Paris.

Nantes.

Society and manners:

Life of landed gentry of Virginia, cur.

Life on board a war ship, cur.

Critical estimate:

"The novel deals with a little recognized side of the war and with a new scene. Miss Jewett's story deals with the fortunes of a young man who loved his country

with his eyes open. He disapproves of rebellion but when the die is cast, throws his lot on her side. As always with Miss Jewett, the style of these narrations is exquisite, simple as finished, the style of a master."

Book Buyer, Oct.1901: 23; 227.

Alice of Old Vincennes

Maurice Thompson

Author: Thompson, Maurice.

Title: Alice of Old Vincennes.

Period: June, 1778.

Historical personages:

Captain Bowman, cur.

Col. George Rogers Clark, cur. American officer.

Captain Helm, pas.

Col. Hamilton, pas. American officer.

Historical events:

English attack on settlement of Vincennes.

Rescue by troops from Kaskaskia, Ill.

Town, city or place:

Kaskaskia, Ill. cur.

St. Louis, Mo. cur.

Wabash River.

Vincennes, Ind. pas.

Quebec, cur.

Society and manners:

Hardships of frontier life and skirmishes with the Indians,

pas Study of Indian life, pas.

Critical estimate:

"Alice of Old Vincennes, is in no sense a great novel and there touches of crudity in its construction, but it is singularly fresh in feeling, full of vivacity and atmosphere, catching and reflecting the picturesque-ness of life in the early days of the Middle West."

The Pilot

James Fenimore Cooper

Author: Cooper, James Fenimore.

Title: The Pilot.

Period: 1776.

Historical personages.

John Paul Jones, pas. Naval hero.

Historical events:

Depredation along the coast of England by Jones in order to draw the attention of the British from our coast.

Society and manners of period:

Life on American man-of-war during the Revolution, pas.

Critical estimate:

"The choice of incidents and actors and the allusions to our history, manners and habits make the story strike deep into the feelings of American readers, and by implicating the tale with our naval history, the author possesses himself of one of the few positions from which our national enthusiasm is accessible."

North American Review, Apr. 1824.

18: 314.

A Continental Dragoon
Robert Nilson Stephens

Author: Stephens, Robert Neilson.

Title: Continental Dragoon.

Period: Nov. 1778.

Historical personages:

General Burgoyne, chap. 4. British commander.

General Clinton, cur. chap. 4. British commander.

General Howe, chap. 4.

General Sage, cur. British commander.

Harry Peyton, pas. Revolutionary soldier.

George Washington, cur. Continental army commander-in-chief.

Historical events:

Skirmishes between continental and royal troops, pas.

Town, city or place:

Boston, Mass.

Charlestown, Mass.

Tarrytown, N. Y.

West Chester Co., N. Y.

Society and manners:

Aristocratic life in lower New York at time of siege of New York, pas.

Critical estimate:

"The Continental Dragoon is a novel dealing with the Revolutionary period. It takes fifty pages of undigested colonial history to get the story fairly well started. There are a few pages of brilliant writing, but they do not make up for its general shapelessness."
Dial, July 1898, 25: 22.

The Spy

J. F. Cooper

Author: Cooper, James Fenimore.

Title: The Spy; a tale of the neutral grounds.

Period: Oct. 1780 - July 25, 1814.

Historical personages:

General Gates, cur. chap.2. American officer.

Major Andre, cur. chap.2. British commander.

Lord Cornwallis, cur. chap.34. British officer.

George III of England, cur. chap.1.

Sir Henry Clinton, cur. chap. 4 and 34. British officer.

Sumpter, cur. chap.11. American officer.

Harvey Birch, e.g. Enoch Crossby, pas. American spy.

George Washington, pas. Commander-in-chief.

General Green, cur. chap.34. American officer.

General Rawdon, cur. chap.34. American officer.

Historical events:

American revolution, pas.

The Skinner raids, cur.

Skirmishes in Westchester Co., N. Y. cur.

War of 1812 (referred to), cur.

Ft. George.

Town, city or place:

Westchester Co., N. Y.

White Plains, N. Y.

Lower Hudson vicinity.

Society and manners:

Life in camp, chap. 16.

Trial of a spy, chap. 26.

System of espionage used in Revolutionary War, pas.

Picture of country life of American aristocracy, chap. 2
and 13.

Critical estimate:

"Imperfect skill in drawing female character, want of constructive ability as manifest in the plot, and some crudeness of expression the most friendly critics noted, but these flaws were forgiven as soon as recognized, so fresh, natural, spirited were the incidents, landscape and tone of the whole."

North American Review, Oct. 1859, 89: 309.





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